

Hybrid Work, Hybrid Care, Gender and Worker Norms after COVID By Lily Rodel

Flexible and remote work is often touted as the solution to the surmounting pressures placed on working parents who juggle full-time employment with childcare. This research investigates the impact of the rapid adoption of remote and hybrid working arrangements post-pandemic on the gendered negotiation of care responsibilities for parents working in hybrid roles in the UK tech sector.

The research begins from the perspective that the acceleration of remote working does not inherently lead to a change in the gendered worker norms, which are structured by the unequal division of household labour and care responsibilities (Williams 2000, Hochschild and Machung 2004, Hays 1990), that have contributed to gender inequality in the workplace. Instead, it is the way that remote working is arranged and implemented by workers and their employers that can reflect these shifting, evolving, or deepening gender norms and shape the way care responsibilities are managed.

Building on interviews with tech workers and their spouses and using Joan Tronto's nested care processes as a framework, this poster will explore the gendered differences in the ways that understandings and undertakings of care differ between mothers and fathers working in the UK tech sector. I suggest that flexible and hybrid working arrangements enable fathers to have greater presence in the home and thus to enact new forms of masculine parenthood that value presence and active involvement and contribute to the daily physical care tasks – 'taking care of' and 'care-giving'. Simultaneously, the managing, organizing, and monitoring of children's lives is still largely presumed to be the mothers' domain – 'caring about' - contributing to affective states of overwhelm and 'mental overload' amongst working mothers.

This poster presents the findings and questions generated by ongoing DPhil research at The Oxford Internet Institute.